



CEPPS/NDI Quarterly Report: April 1 to June 30, 2005

KYRGYZSTAN: POLITICAL PARTY ASSISTANCE AND CIVIC ADVOCACY SUPPORT

**USAID Associate Cooperative Agreement No. 116-A-00-04-00008-00 under the
Leader Cooperative Agreement No. DGC-A-00-01-00004-00**

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I. SUMMARY

Between April 1 and June 30, 2005, the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) conducted political and civic programs in Kyrgyzstan under U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Associate Cooperative Agreement No. 116-A-00-04-00008-00. NDI's programs in Kyrgyzstan correspond to USAID Strategic Objective 2.1 to promote "strengthened democratic culture among citizens and target institutions."

NDI's activities during the quarter focused on the upcoming presidential elections and support for democratic development in the post-Akaev political environment. In advance of the July 10 elections, NDI provided consultations on effective campaigning techniques to political parties and independent candidates and conducted a series of training programs to prepare partisan pollwatchers to monitor the election process. In May, NDI organized a constitutional conference to provide international expertise as Kyrgyzstan considered amendments to its constitution. NDI also provided funding, technical and logistical support for an international election mission by the European Network of Election Monitoring Organizations (ENEMO) to monitor the presidential elections. The most recent ENEMO mission to Kyrgyzstan unites representatives of election monitoring organizations from 13 former Soviet Union and Eastern European countries to conduct both long- and short-term monitoring of the election process.

NDI's civic programming this quarter focused on providing guidance and technical support to the Coalition for Democracy and Civil Society (Coalition) for its election monitoring efforts. With NDI assistance, the Coalition trained long- and short-term election monitors, prepared written monitoring materials, and plans to collect protocols in the majority of election districts in Kyrgyzstan. The Coalition continued to be an outspoken advocate of democratic reforms through public statements that were noted in both international and domestic media. NDI also identified four emerging democracy-oriented nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to receive small grants to foster their growth and development.

As a result of NDI's activities, political party activists were introduced to effective methods of party building and campaigning, and the public stands to benefit from better skilled monitors in the polling stations. NDI's work with ENEMO will help focus international attention to the conduct of the presidential elections, while support to the Coalition has helped that organization continue to lead civil society's efforts toward increasing democratic reforms and ensuring a free and fair election process.

NDI will continue to work with political parties, parliament, civic groups and individual in support of democratic development in Kyrgyzstan during the next quarter. Surrounding the July 10 presidential election, NDI will offer guidance and support to the election monitoring missions of ENEMO and the Coalition. After the election, NDI will evaluate the needs and openings for specific activities with political parties and parliament in coordination with USAID. Among its civic activities, NDI will continue to provide organizational guidance and financial support to the Coalition and emerging democracy-oriented nongovernmental organizations (NGOs).

II. Background

Political Environment

During the past 10 years, Kyrgyzstan has failed to live up to its reputation, gained immediately after independence, as the most democratic country of Central Asia. Former President Askar Akaev consolidated his power through flawed elections and referenda and executive decrees not subject to challenge by either the legislative or judicial branches. Frustration with his regime mounted, leading to mass protests in the aftermath of the February and March 2005 parliamentary polls. Those elections were strongly criticized by the domestic and international communities for extensive vote rigging, interference by the local authorities, and intimidation of voters and election observers. After the voting, thousands of Kyrgyz citizens took to the streets around the country in protest. When protestors stormed the presidential administration building on March 24, then President Akaev fled the country and opposition leaders quickly formed an interim government.

The interim government found itself tasked with the challenge of maintaining order while preparing for early presidential elections and satisfying public demands for reform. The task was not always easy. In mid-May, violence in the Uzbek border town of Andijon sent an influx of refugees into southern Kyrgyzstan. The interim government has struggled to balance competing demands on how to deal with the refugees from the Uzbek government, the international community, and Kyrgyz residents in the region. Incidents of violence also took place throughout the quarter domestically, including the April 10 murder of an ally of political leader Felix Kulov, the storming and retaking of the Supreme Court building on June 1; the murder of a businessman and parliamentarian on June 10; a June 11 attack on the campaign headquarters of candidate and acting President Kurmanbek Bakiev; and a violent conflict between opponents and supporters of parliamentarian Bayaman Erkinbayev on June 13. Events culminated in a thwarted attempt to take the presidential administration building in mid-June. On June 17, several hundred supporters of businessman Urmatbek Baryktabasov, who was disqualified from the presidential race because he holds Kazakh citizenship, stormed and briefly held the White House in Bishkek

before being driven out with tear gas. Acting President Kurmanbek Bakiev's administration has since adopted a heightened security posture and taken measures that have restored order in the capital, although the population remains concerned about the possibility for social unrest.

Despite the uncertainties of the political situation, there have been significant openings to strengthen democracy in Kyrgyzstan. Upon taking power, the interim government immediately began the process of reversing many policies decreed or pushed through parliament by the former president. A Constitutional Council was formed in May from members of parliament, civil society, political parties, government authorities and judicial bodies to submit recommendations on constitutional amendments. The council's internal Working Group developed recommendations on such major issues as the balance of power between the presidential and legislative branch, the independence of the judiciary, the number and nature of seats in the parliament, the role of the prime minister and cabinet, and the authority of local government. The council approved the recommendations and opened them to nationwide discussion. Once the discussion period ends, the parliament has agreed to consider the recommended changes. The country's most influential political leaders, acting President Kurmanbek Bakiev and acting First Vice Prime Minister Felix Kulov, have publicly agreed to support constitutional reform by this October. Both leaders also issued a joint statement that called on local officials to work within the framework of the law and not abuse administrative resources in favor of any candidate during the presidential elections.

In this environment, NDI has worked to provide critical support not only to the interim government but also to the new parliament and groups that seek to participate in the political process. These efforts to serve as a resource for democratic forces include educating parties and candidates about campaign techniques; training partisan pollwatchers; providing technical assistance in the areas of coalition building and parliamentary operations; sharing international expertise on constitutional reform, offering guidance and technical support to the Coalition's election monitoring efforts; and bringing international attention to the elections through the work of ENEMO.

NDI in Kyrgyzstan

With support from USAID, NDI has conducted parliamentary programs in Kyrgyzstan since 1996 and civic and media programs since 1999. NDI's legislative programs have increased the professionalism of parliamentary staff, promoted legislation to bring Kyrgyz law in line with international standards, and fostered constituency relations. NDI-sponsored hearings have drawn attention to important public issues and encouraged citizens to participate in the legislative process. The network of members of parliament (MPs) and legislative staff that NDI has developed over the past nine years makes current parliamentary programming more effective.

NDI's civil society strengthening programs have helped build networks of citizens and activists who are trained in grassroots organizing and advocacy. NDI has administered a small grants program supporting advocacy projects throughout the country and has launched a program to teach nongovernmental (NGO) activists to monitor government officials and develop issue-based coalitions.

Since 1999, the Institute has worked with the Coalition for Democracy and Civil Society, which focuses on electoral monitoring, voter education and government transparency issues. The Coalition is an independent, non-partisan organization with a central headquarters in Bishkek and nine regional branches. The creation and cultivation of the Coalition marks one of NDI's most notable achievements in Kyrgyzstan. Despite pressure from the government, the Coalition has successfully implemented programs that have resulted in greater public participation in national policy debates. The Coalition has developed into the leading civic organization in Kyrgyzstan, and its programs are integral to engaging civic society in the current election cycle.

III. OBJECTIVES

NDI's original two-year objectives for this cooperative agreement are the following:

Political Party Assistance

- Strengthen the organizational capacity of parties at the local level and their ability to attract, maintain and mobilize supporters;
- Promote cooperation between political parties and nongovernmental organizations; and
- Enhance the capacity for a variety of parties to compete in elections.

Civic Advocacy Support

- Strengthen the organizational capacity and sustainability of the Coalition;
- Increase the ability of the Coalition to advocate for democratic reforms;
- Assist the Coalition to monitor and report on the parliamentary and presidential election periods, including the campaign period and voting and counting on election day;
- Assist democracy-oriented groups to develop permanent, self-sustaining organizations with defined structures and operating procedures; and
- Assist emerging democracy-oriented groups with their efforts to conduct public advocacy campaigns.

In May/June 2005, USAID modified its agreement with NDI to include additional activities in light of the new political environment following President Akaev's resignation and the scheduling of an early presidential election. The objectives under this modification are as follows:

Support for the Coalition for Democracy and Civil Society

- Enhance the legitimacy and transparency of the next series of elections

Support for the European Network of Election Monitoring Organizations

- Provide credible information to the domestic and international communities from an international delegation familiar with post-Soviet societies.

Training for Campaign Teams for Next Series of Elections

- Improve the capacity of candidates to compete in upcoming elections.

Technical Assistance to Kyrgyzstan's Parliament

- Develop a more effective, transparent and accountable parliament with improved legislative processes and more citizen participation.

IV. PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

Political Program Activities

Presidential Candidate Consultations

Throughout the quarter, NDI conducted a series of consultations and trainings to improve the capacity of candidates to compete in upcoming presidential elections. More than 25 consultations and training sessions were conducted across the political spectrum with candidates, political figures, party officials and campaign activists. An international expert traveled to Kyrgyzstan in April and June to conduct individual consultations and meetings. In April, NDI meetings with key political figures focused on the impact of political developments in late March and how to make use of new opportunities for democratic reform in Kyrgyzstan. Strategic consultations in June were held primarily with presidential campaign teams in Bishkek, Osh and Jalalabad. Consultations were tailored to the sophistication level of individual campaigns. Topics ranged from guidance on basic message development, voter contact, identifying voters and campaign planning to advice on conducting substantive campaigns that seek real voter support rather than relying on electoral fraud.

Following these individual consultations, an in-house NDI trainer conducted a day-long training for presidential candidate teams on June 15. NDI invited all candidates and their campaign teams. More than 20 people participated, including campaign staff for major candidates, such as Bakiev, Bakir uulu, Jeksheev, Umetalieva, Baryktabasov, and Dushebaev. The training covered the basic aspects of campaign training and management, specifically: message development, voter outreach, campaign calendars, and public speaking. Candidate teams received advice on developing or finalizing a message, voter outreach tactics that could be used by small volunteer teams, message box exercises on voter outreach, a scale for gauging voter support, and strategies for canvassing both door-to-door and personal networks (friends, relatives, neighbors and acquaintances).

Partisan Pollwatcher Trainings

In late June, NDI began a series of one-day “Master Trainings” in pollwatching for presidential campaign teams to provide them with the tools to train additional pollwatchers. On June 26-27, trainings were held in Bishkek for five campaign teams: Bakiev, Umetalieva, Bakir uulu, Jeksheev, and Dushebaev. Thirty people participated in each of the trainings, most of whom had not previously worked as partisan pollwatchers. On June 29-30, two additional trainings were conducted in Jalal-Abad with participants from the campaign teams of Bakiev, Bakir uulu, and Umetalieva (the only candidates with offices in Jalal-Abad oblast). Participants in the Jalal-Abad trainings pledged to conduct pollwatcher trainings for their activists.

The format of the trainings, which will be the same for four similar trainings to be held next quarter in early July, includes working in small groups, having participants make presentations on aspects of the election law, practicing writing complaints to election commissions, and acting out situations such as defending observers' rights. Participants discussed their rights as pollwatchers, learned their role on Election Day, and concentrated on practical exercises to encourage familiarity with the Election Day process. Through NDI's interactive training, partisan pollwatchers were encouraged to be more active in polling stations. Participants received an NDI-designed manual with user-friendly information, an overview of major changes in the election law, Election Day procedures at the polling station, accreditation forms, and model observer forms for partisan pollwatchers. NDI also designed a CD-ROM with useful election-related materials.

Support for Constitutional Reform

Following events in March 2005, Kyrgyzstan initiated a review of its constitution to consider ways to prevent future governments from abusing their power. Parliament formed a Constitutional Council in May from members of parliament, civil society, political parties, government authorities and judicial bodies to submit recommendations on constitutional amendments. To support this process, NDI organized a conference in late May with support from the Academy for Educational Development (AED). The May 23-24 conference engaged the main actors in the constitutional reform process, along with regional experts, in a discussion of such key constitutional issues as the balance of power between the presidential and legislative branch, the independence of the judiciary, and the authority of local government. NDI brought in two international experts, Dr. Stanley Bach from the United States and Professor Christina Murray from South Africa, to provide comparative experiences and expertise on the issues of constitutional development and law. The two-day conference featured panelists from the Kyrgyz parliament, executive branch, judiciary, and leading civic, business, media, and political party representatives. The participants included members of the Kyrgyzstan's Constitutional Council, as well as representatives of regional media outlets and civil society organizations. Many participants were especially interested in hearing about the constitutional reform process undertaken in South Africa, and remarked on the parallels between it and the current process in which Kyrgyzstan is engaged. Participants from the regions were able to learn more about the constitutional reform process, which had not yet been discussed widely outside of Bishkek.

After the conference, NDI conducted follow-up activities to inform the public more widely about the constitutional reform process. NDI worked with Internews to produce and distribute a video of the conference. The video was prepared as a civic education training tool for political parties, civic groups, and other interested parties to discuss issues introduced at the conference. NDI also sponsored participation at the conference of several staff from its network of information centers for democracy, who followed up in their regions with programs to inform and engage the community in the constitutional reform process. In one such project, NDI's information centers worked with ACDI/VOCA to hold discussions throughout southern Kyrgyzstan on the topic of constitutional reform. NDI also distributed commentary prepared by Bach and Murray to the entire constitutional council, all members of parliament, key government offices, and the wider NGO community.

International Election Monitoring Mission (ENEMO)

NDI provided financial, technical and logistical support for an international election mission organized by the European Network of Election-Monitoring Organizations (ENEMO) to monitor the July 10 presidential elections. ENEMO is an association of 17 civic organizations from sixteen countries of the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, with 13 of those countries represented in the mission to monitor Kyrgyzstan's presidential elections. These groups are the leading domestic election monitoring groups in their countries and have collectively observed more than 110 national elections and trained more than 100,000 election monitors.

At the beginning of June, ENEMO opened the mission's central office in Bishkek and conducted an introductory briefing before deploying 14 long-term observers to all oblasts of the Republic. Throughout the pre-election period, long-term observers have interviewed candidates, all levels of election commissioners, government officials, and civic activists to monitor all aspects of the election campaign, including the formation of election commissions, quality of the voter lists, media coverage, protest actions, and the campaign organization of all candidates. On Election Day, ENEMO will deploy 40 short-term observers to monitor the voting process and vote count procedures in Kyrgyzstan. In addition, 26 mid-term observers have already been deployed to monitor the preparation and conduct of out-of-country voting in Russia and Kazakhstan with separate funding from the OSCE.

The deployment of international observers through the ENEMO mission offers an impartial assessment of the pre-election process. Following the election, ENEMO will provide a comprehensive report on the balloting. The mission aims to promote confidence in the integrity of the election process to the degree warranted and strengthen the process by identifying problems and offering recommendations to resolve them.

Civic Program Activities

The Coalition for Democracy and Civil Society

In this reporting period, the Coalition addressed new challenges in the aftermath of the historic March 24 events in Kyrgyzstan. Immediately preceding the protests that led to President Askar Akaev's resignation, the Coalition observed the February and March parliamentary elections and became an outspoken critic of the many irregularities that characterized the elections. The Coalition leadership stayed involved and played a prominent role in promoting democratic reform in the new political environment. The Coalition organized the National Civil Society Forum, served as an advocate on issues of national importance, and initiated pre-election monitoring of the presidential campaign. The Coalition also addressed internal organizational matters at its General Assembly.

The National Civil Society Forum

The Coalition took the lead in organizing a nationwide forum to discuss the role that civil society should play in setting the reform agenda in the new political environment of Kyrgyzstan.

The National Civil Society Forum took place on April 19-20 with funding from the OSCE, the Soros Foundation, and USAID via AED. NDI helped the Coalition secure AED assistance.

At the forum, about 400 representatives non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from around the country convened to discuss civil society's role and recommend a transition agenda for the new government. With power being redistributed in the central government as well as the *oblast* and *raion* levels, NGOs gathered to reevaluate how civic society can continue to support democratic reforms and prepare for the presidential elections. Civil society demanded action from the interim government on a number of important issues, including judicial reform, constitutional reform, presidential elections, government appointments, land squatting, security sector reform, regional conflicts, gender policy, corruption, and youth participation. Analysts called it the first positive step in the post-revolutionary period.

The conference empowered civil society to put much-needed pressure on the interim government to ensure democratic reforms. The agenda began with introductory speeches and calls for civil society to cooperate and jointly develop concrete recommendations. Participants then broke down into working groups to discuss and reach conclusions about designated issues for reform. The following day, civil society invited key leaders of the interim government, political parties and media to attend the presentation of the forum's resolution and hear civil society's recommendations. Afterwards, acting President Bakiev, Parliamentary Speaker Tekebaev, and Constitutional Chair Baekova were each given the opportunity to speak and answer questions from the audience.

The conference resulted in a 2-page resolution on reforms that should be implemented by the interim government, in addition to a series of recommendations that emerged from the working groups. Various civic groups and political leaders also were given the opportunity to publicly present their vision for the future of Kyrgyzstan. Smaller programs have been conducted in different regions of Kyrgyzstan, including one organized in part by NDI's information center to find possible areas of cooperation between the public and government. The forum agenda focused on the region's most important issues including land rights, internal migration and the presidential elections.

Advocate on Issues of National Importance

The Coalition remained an outspoken advocate of democratic reforms through active statements and comments that were frequently quoted by both international and domestic media. The Coalition issued statements that called for the resignation of the head of the Supreme Court to restore public confidence in the judiciary, recommended that the Bishkek city administration and law enforcement bodies take strict measures against land squatting, and informed the public of election violations that affected the legitimacy of parliamentarians in certain districts.

Coalition President Edil Baisalov in particular was quite active in informing the domestic and international community about the significance of events in Kyrgyzstan. In May, Baisalov attended a Community of Democracies forum in Chile, testified before the U.S. House Committee for International Affairs and had speaking engagements in Washington and New York. Coalition members and staff stayed active at the grassroots level in promoting new

dialogue among the local authorities and public based on shifted paradigms. The Coalition was also engaged in several high profile activities such as appointment of its leader to the State Commission on Evaluation that examined the reasons behind the events of March 24 and identifying ways to preserve stability. The Coalition was outspoken about the May 13 Andijon events in neighboring Uzbekistan and welcoming asylum seekers from there. Edil Baisalov served on a panel to discuss possible constitutional amendments on local government at NDI's Constitutional Conference in late May.

Election Monitoring of the Presidential Campaign

In this quarter, the Coalition organized an extensive operation to monitor the July 10 special election for president. The Coalition deployed approximately 150 long-term observers (LTOs) in early May to monitor the formation of election commissions, report on the pre-election campaign, and train short-term observers (STOs). On Election Day, the Coalition plans to recruit and train approximately 3,000 STOs to be deployed in teams of two to monitor polling stations around the country.

The Coalition held a series of four LTO trainings on May 15-19 – two held in Bishkek, two in Osh. NDI provided input to increase the effectiveness of the LTO manual, reporting mechanisms, and training sessions. While preparing for the presidential elections, the Coalition continued to monitor events related to the parliamentary elections. Monitors were deployed in Kochkor and Ton, two districts where additional rounds were held June 5 and June 19.

Before initiating the election monitoring operation, the Coalition reviewed the lessons learned from its monitoring of the parliamentary elections. The Coalition updated forms, training modules, and observer materials with input from NDI. NDI sent a visiting trainer to participate in a seminar to improve Coalition training for its STOs in early June, and another trainer arrived in late June to assist in the overall preparation of Coalition STOs in the regions. STO trainings began on June 26 and were held in a new one-day format rather than the previous 4-hour sessions to improve their quality. Observers received their training manual with instructions to conduct monitoring and collect election protocols, which will be posted to the Coalition's website to deter fraud at the election commission level.

Fourth General Assembly of the Coalition

From April 18-20, the Coalition held its Fourth General Assembly. The meeting was attended by the 15 members of the organizations board of directors, the president, 9 regional office directors, the Bishkek office staff, and 115 additional delegates from around the country. After a preliminary meeting of the board and regional directors, the session began with the 2003-2004 report on the activities of the Coalition presented by Edil Baisalov. The floor was then opened for question, comment, and discussion. In the evenings, politicians were invited to speak and answer questions posed by the Coalition's delegates. Acting Foreign Minister Rosa Otunbaeva spoke on April 19, and the acting Minister for Transportation and Communication spoke on April 20.

The General Assembly's main purpose was the election of officers. In accordance with by-laws, the board of directors nominated Coalition President Baisalov, whose name was then put to a vote before the delegates. Baisalov was re-elected president almost unanimously by the General Assembly. The General Assembly also voted on the 7 national representatives to the board of directors, followed by a series of Regional Assembly meetings that elected 8 regional representatives to sit on the board. Subsequent to the elections, the Coalition convened to hold a plenary session to discuss future activities and the new board held its first meeting.

Emerging Democracy Nongovernmental Organizations (NGOs)

This quarter, NDI initiated a new small grants program for emerging democracy nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in Kyrgyzstan. The grant program aims to develop the capacity and sustainability of emerging NGOs that work to promote democratic reforms. NDI announced an open competition in late April and received 47 applications from all regions of the country by the May 20 deadline. After an initial screening, NDI submitted ten applications to the grants committee, comprised of representatives from NDI, USAID, Freedom House, Counterpart, and the US Embassy Democracy Commission. The committee selected the following four recipients on June 10:

- The public association "Komokchu" located in Jalalabad oblast was awarded \$1,455 to conduct nine two-day seminars for 150 NGO leaders to discuss the mission and goals of a new association of local NGOs.
- The public association "Umut-Kushu" based in Belovodskoe was awarded \$950 for holding two rounds of trainings on advocacy and national social benefits policies.
- The nationwide civic youth movement "KelKel Vozrozhdenie" received an initial installment of \$800 to improve communication between the Bishkek headquarters and regional organizing committees.
- The Nookat Teachers' Association in Osh oblast received a grant in the amount of \$500 for organizational and membership development over a two-month period.

NDI has begun to work with the grantees to provide guidance and project oversight. In mid-June, NDI trained the four grant recipients on organizational development and the financial and program reporting requirements of the grants. The following day, NDI held individual consultations for each grantee to discuss strategies and design budgets needed to implement the proposed projects. NDI has also traveled to work with regionally-based grantees to help them develop action plans for their projects and improve their overall organizational development.

In addition to the NGO grant program, NDI has served as a resource and provided trainings to organizations working toward democratic change throughout the quarter. In April, NDI met with the youth group KelKel to offer NDI's expertise in the areas of strategic planning, developing charters and by-laws, internal communications, personnel structures, fundraising, financial management, and membership development. On May 11-13, NDI, together with Freedom House and funding from AED, held a workshop for 33 KelKel activists. The workshop brought together KelKel activists from Bishkek and the regions to discuss their future organizational development and program plans. NDI trained the activists in all stages of strategic planning, the importance of non-partisanship, organizational development, and election

programs. The workshop also included a component in which participants had an opportunity to meet with international donors. Other groups with which NDI worked include the spin off youth group, Birge. NDI met with Birge leaders to assess their needs and discuss the legal requirements for registration and options for structuring the newly-formed organization.

Campaign for Teachers' Rights

On May 29-30, NDI held a national conference on teachers' rights with sponsorship from AED. As employees of the state, teachers are extremely vulnerable to government manipulation. The need to unite together to protect their rights emerged from discussion clubs initiated by teachers at NDI's information centers for democracy. The national teachers' conference in late May brought together more than 100 teachers, principles, teachers' union committee members, and NGO leaders from all regions of Kyrgyzstan to discuss the problems faced by teachers and identify ways to address them. The major issues include limited access to information, forced subscription to state newspapers, the government's role in education, funding for education, and teachers' involvement in elections. Teachers broke into small groups by topic and region to develop messages on particular issues, which they then were able to discuss in an open forum with the government officials attending the conference. The dialogue between educators and state officials and deputies became tense, but was fruitful. By the end of the sessions, deputies and state officials admitted that they did not appreciate the real crisis in the regions and assured the participants they would inform their colleagues of the issues raised at the conference.

In advance of the national conference, NDI's information centers around the country held discussion clubs with teachers to talk about the issues that most affect them. Some groups decided to establish teachers' associations to would advocate their interests and protect their rights. The information center in Uzgen also held a preliminary regional teachers' conference on April 16, which brought together over 320 participants, including local officials, school administrators, and teachers.

V. RESULTS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Political Party Assistance

Objective:

- *Strengthened organizational capacity of parties at the local level.*

Indicator:

- *National parties have created and put into place branch development programs in selected regions.*

Given the nature of the presidential race, NDI's preparation of candidates and their campaign teams for the presidential election did not focus on political party development per se. However, political party activists participated in many of NDI activities. Party representatives were among the participants in NDI's partisan pollwatcher trainings. An average of 30 people from various parties and candidate teams participated in each of the four partisan pollwatcher trainings held this quarter. While the full effect of these trainings will not be seen until Election

Day on July 10, participants found the training to be useful. Many had not previously worked as partisan pollwatchers, suggesting the materials and practice with Election Day scenarios would be especially important. Participants also pledged to NDI that they would conduct similar pollwatcher trainings for activists from their parties and candidate teams. In addition to the actual trainings, NDI widely distributed pollwatcher training materials to political parties and candidates.

Objective:

- *Parties and NGOs have established avenues for cooperation.*

Indicator:

- *Parties and NGOs have created joint programs to address citizen concerns at the local or regional level.*

NDI's activities this quarter helped serve as a bridge between politicians and civil society leaders. In particular, the National Civil Society Forum in late April empowered civil society to put much-needed pressure on the interim government to ensure democratic reforms. After convening to formulate a transition agenda, civil society representatives presented their recommendations to key leaders of the interim government and political parties, including acting President Bakiev, Parliamentary Speaker Tekebaev, and Constitutional Chair Baekova. The audience was also given the opportunity to ask questions about specific issues. The conference resulted in a 2-page resolution on reforms that should be implemented by the interim government. Smaller programs have been conducted in different regions of Kyrgyzstan, including one forum organized in part by NDI's information center to find possible areas of cooperation between the public and government. The forum agenda focused on the region's most important issues including land rights, internal migration and the presidential elections.

Objective:

- *Parties compete more effectively in elections.*

Indicator:

- *Parties have created separate local campaigns for both municipal government and single-mandate parliamentary seats.*

The presidential race has been conducted largely through individual candidates and their campaign teams. As the indicator above suggests, the role of parties in the Kyrgyz system is much greater in local and parliamentary elections. For the most part, political parties have been relatively passive in the presidential campaign, as demonstrated by the failure of political parties to fill their allotted one-third representation in many election commissions. However, NDI's pollwatcher trainings prepared party activists to serve as and train additional election monitors that would bolster the integrity of the election process.

Civic Advocacy Support

Objective: Strengthen the organizational capacity and sustainability of the Coalition.

Indicators:

- *The Coalition employs new methods to recruit more volunteers for regional and national activities.*
- *Coalition headquarters communicates more frequently with its regional offices, encouraging the regional offices to participate in more activities.*
- *The Coalition uses new strategies to increase membership and is able to establish five new regional offices.*
- *The Coalition is led by senior staff members who demonstrate the ability to manage problems with decreasing assistance from NDI.*
- *The Coalition diversifies its funding base.*

Programmatically, the Coalition set an ambitious target to greatly increase the number of election observers for the presidential elections. With training and organizational support from NDI, the Coalition recruited and prepared close to 3,000 short-term election observers for Election Day. In terms of diversifying its funding base, the Coalition successfully received funding from a multitude of donors for such projects as the National Civil Society Forum and a voter hotline for the July 10 election.

In addition to a full schedule of election-related activities, the Coalition held its Fourth General Assembly this April. The General Assembly brought together representatives from the central and regional offices, as well as the board, to discuss Coalition business and elect new members to the board.

Objective: Increase the ability of the Coalition to advocate for democratic reforms.

Indicators:

- *The parliament considers the Coalition's recommendations on how to increase public access to parliament prior to the parliamentary elections and to the transition to the new unicameral system.*
- *Coalition members participate at public and parliamentary hearings on their topics of interest.*
- *The Coalition conducts programs for government officials and the public to discuss issues in advance of local elections.*

The Coalition remained an outspoken advocate of democratic reforms through active statements and comments that were frequently quoted by both international and domestic media. During trips to Chile and United States, the Coalition President Edil Baisalov played a key role in informing the international community about the significance of events in Kyrgyzstan. The Coalition's leader was also engaged in several high profile activities such as serving on the State Commission to evaluate the events of March 24 and giving a presentation at NDI's Constitutional Conference.

Objective: Assist the Coalition to monitor and report on the parliamentary and presidential election periods, including the campaign period and voting and counting on election day.

Indicators:

- *Coalition local and national leadership will be trained in monitoring the pre-election period and election day and conduct of a Parallel Vote Tabulation (PVT).*
- *The Coalition conducts a PVT in a manner judged professional and competent by the international community.*

The Coalition organized an extensive operation to monitor the July 10 special election for president. The Coalition deployed 150 long-term observers (LTOs) in early May to monitor the formation of election commissions, report on the pre-election campaign, and train short-term observers (STOs). By the end of June, the Coalition had recruited and trained many of their 3,000 planned STOs. NDI provided training guidance and materials to better prepare the STOs to monitor polling stations on election night and collect election protocols, which will be posted on the Coalition's website to deter fraud at the election commission level. Results from this effort will be apparent after the July 10 election, when the Coalition issues its election statement and posts the protocols.

Objective: Help emerging democracy-oriented groups to develop permanent, self-sustaining organizations with defined structures and operating procedures.

Indicators:

- *Emerging NGOs receiving assistance from NDI design and implement plans for volunteer and membership recruitment and leadership development.*
- *Emerging NGOs increase their membership and volunteer base.*
- *Tasks and responsibilities are clearly defined for the staff of each emerging NGO.*
- *Emerging NGOs demonstrate the potential for financial independence by forming a finance and fundraising committee.*

NDI initiated its small grants program for emerging democracy nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) this quarter. After identifying the four grant recipients, NDI immediately began to offer guidance and project oversight. In mid-June, recipients received trainings on organizational development and the financial and program reporting requirements of the grants. NDI also held individual consultations for each grantee to discuss strategies and design budgets needed to implement the proposed projects. More results will come as the grantees projects get underway in the next quarter.

In addition to the NGO grant program, NDI has served as a resource and provided trainings to organizations working toward democratic change throughout the quarter. NDI provided the youth group KelKel with expertise in the areas of strategic planning, developing charters and by-laws, internal communications, personnel structures, fundraising, financial management, and membership development. NDI's technical advice provided support for this group during a critical time and contributed to KelKel's success in registering with the Kyrgyz government as an NGO and securing funding from multiple such international donors as the OSCE, the Democracy Commission, and IFES.

Objective: Assist emerging democracy-oriented NGOs with their efforts to conduct public advocacy campaigns.

Indicators:

- *At least three small NGOs use new methods and techniques in campaigns that include advocacy and monitoring government promises and performance.*
- *All emerging NGOs with which NDI works participates at public and parliamentary hearings that address their topic of interest.*

While the small grants program for emerging democracy NGOs just began this quarter, NDI has consistently worked with a wide variety of small civic groups. Many of these groups were very active by expressing their opinions and offering suggestions during the National Civil Society Forum, conducting voter outreach, and contributing to the civic campaign “I am for fair elections!” Many smaller teachers groups with which NDI works also participated in the NDI-sponsored national teachers’ conference. At the conference, the groups discussed long-standing problems with the education system and proposed solutions. Their proposals were drafted as an appeal to the Acting President and Prime Minister, Minister for Education, and Deputies of the Jogorku Kenesh (parliament) of the Kyrgyz Republic. Follow-up meetings of conference participants were held in Jalalabad, Karasuu, Tashkumyr, and Nookat to continue to pressure local officials to protect the rights of teachers. Tynymbek Ormonbekov, the head of social policy development at the White House, participated in the conference and has told NDI he would like to continue to work with us on future projects to improve the education system of Kyrgyzstan.

Support for the Coalition for Democracy and Civil Society

Objective: Enhance the legitimacy and transparency of the next series of elections.

Indicators:

- *The Coalition issues a public report on the conduct (legality, transparency, etc.) of the election within 48 hours of the polls closing.*
- *The Coalition collects and posts on its website protocols from 80 percent of precincts.*

The Coalition organized an extensive operation to monitor the July 10 special election for president. The Coalition deployed 150 long-term observers (LTOs) in early May to monitor the formation of election commissions, report on the pre-election campaign, and train short-term observers (STOs). By the end of June, the Coalition had recruited and trained many of their 3,000 planned STOs. NDI provided training guidance and materials to better prepare the STOs to monitor polling stations on election night and collect election protocols, which will be posted on the Coalition’s website to deter fraud at the election commission level. Results from this effort will be apparent after the July 10 election, when the Coalition issues its election statement and posts the protocols.

Support for the European Network of Election Monitoring Organizations

Objective: Provide credible information to the domestic and international communities from an international delegation familiar with post-Soviet societies.

Indicators:

- *ENEMO promptly documents and reports fraudulent practices on election day.*
- *ENEMO issues detailed election assessment reports throughout the campaign period that widely disseminated in the domestic and international communities.*

The European Network of Election-Monitoring Organizations (ENEMO) began its long-term monitoring of the elections in early June. ENEMO established a central office in Bishkek, deployed 14 long-term observers to every oblast in the country, and monitored the pre-election campaign. On July 6, ENEMO held a press conference and issued a report on the pre-election period. The report presented observations on all aspects of the campaign, including candidate registration, election administration, voter lists, out-of-country voting, the campaign and media environment, the use of administrative resources, and voter education. ENEMO also issued four recommendations to the Central Election Committee to help increase transparency of the election process. ENEMO will issue a statement on the conduct of the voting and vote count following Election Day early next quarter.

Training for Candidate Teams for Next Series of Elections

Objective: Candidates improve their capacity to compete in the presidential election scheduled for July 10, 2005.

Indicators:

- *Selected candidates and parties create national platforms and messages.*
- *Parties develop and contribute their vision of the country's future to national debate on the structure and role of government in the post-Akaev era.*

NDI helped candidate teams develop stronger campaign management skills and increase contact with the electorate through consultations and training sessions. As a result, candidates were better prepared during public events such as the nationally televised candidate debates. NDI trainings had provided candidate and their teams the opportunity to shape their national platform and messages. NDI trainings also helped parties and candidate teams prepare partisan pollwatchers to serve as and train additional election monitors that would bolster the integrity of the election process.

Technical Assistance to Kyrgyzstan's Parliament

Objective: Develop more effective, transparent and accountable parliament with improved legislative processes and more citizen participation.

Indicators:

- *Parliament plays an active and constructive role in shaping constitutional reforms and democratic framework legislation.*

- *MPs take measures, including holding town hall meetings or establishing district offices, to engage citizens in parliamentary decision making.*

Under the new modified agreement, NDI began laying the foundations to revive a parliamentary program in May 2005. NDI has maintained and continued to build relationships across the political spectrum with former and current members of parliament. Members of the latest parliament were also including in many NDI activities, including political consultations, the National Civil Society Forum in April, and the Constitutional Conference in May. Through these activities, NDI provided comparative information on democratic reforms in other parts of the world and allowed participating MPs to hear from civil society and regular Kyrgyz citizens. The majority of NDI's work with parliament will begin next quarter once the political landscape is more clear following the presidential landscape.

VI. FUTURE ACTIVITIES

NDI will continue to work with political parties, parliament, civic groups and individual in support of democratic development in Kyrgyzstan during the next quarter. Surrounding the July 10 presidential election, NDI will offer guidance and support to the election monitoring missions of ENEMO and the Coalition. After the election, NDI will evaluate the needs and openings for specific activities with political parties and parliament in coordination with USAID. Among its civic activities, NDI will continue to provide organizational guidance and financial support to the Coalition and emerging democracy-oriented nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), particularly those that received small grants this quarter.

Specifically, NDI's civic and political programs hope to take advantage of the post-election environment to promote institutional development during the next quarter. The constitutional reform process will continue with further public discussion, parliamentary debate, and the possibility of additional amendment proposals. NDI will continue to promote detailed discussion of the constitution and inform citizens of the amendment process. The Institute will engage members of parliament throughout the process of consideration, encouraging dialogue and a public constitutional review process.

It is likely that passage of constitutional amendments will add 30 seats to the parliament, with elections to be held in early 2006 on the basis of proportionate representation. NDI will consult with the leadership of political parties in their central offices and with regional branches to facilitate their organizations and plans for mounting national campaigns for the parliamentary by-elections. For perhaps the first time in the history of the Kyrgyz Republic, political parties will have the opportunity to compete openly and fairly for public support. The Institute will consult with political party membership and leadership on their development of issue-based platforms that differentiate each from the rest of the parties. NDI will provide detailed, practical consultations and training on leadership development, platform and message development, membership and volunteer recruitment, targeting, and communication structures.

If legislation is put forward to reform political party law, NDI also would work with political parties on development and publication of position papers and specific proposals. In its work with the parliament, the Institute would provide comparative information on modern

democratic political party legislation and structures. NDI would also nurture internal party democracy and development of specific rules and procedures for the selection of candidates and their placement on party lists.

In its parliamentary program, the Institute will recruit a parliamentary expert and aim to place him/her in Bishkek for the parliamentary session in September. During the parliamentary summer recess, the Institute will consult with parliamentary leadership, individual parliamentarians, and civil society organizations to develop an orientation program for parliamentarians and parliamentary staff. NDI will carry out the program in the fall.

NDI's work with the Coalition during the next quarter will begin with a strategic planning retreat. This retreat will allow the organization's Board of Directors and staff through to have a series of discussions aimed at analyzing the Coalition's strategy and performance during the presidential election to refine the organizational goals and develop a workplan for the remainder of the grant period. The Institute will focus particular attention of coordination between the central and regional offices of the Coalition.

NDI will also continue to work with emerging democracy NGOs. In addition to funding through the small grants program, NDI would provide organizational support and training to create more sustainable democratically-oriented NGOs. The work would include consultations and trainings for the central offices, as well as regional branches where applicable, on such topics as membership development, communication structures, and strategic planning.

VII. PERSONNEL

Amy Schultz oversaw NDI's political party and parliamentary programming and served as office director. Civic trainer Julia Lear ran NDI's civil society program. Program officer Erin Epstein supported political and civic programming until May. Program officer Monica Bland arrived in late April to take over these duties and work closely with the ENEMO mission of international election monitors.